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# UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 003931.P001

Total Pages 5

First Named Inventor or Application Identifier Arthur Michael Keller

Express Mail Label No. EL370843372US

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Box Patent Application  
Washington, D. C. 20231

## APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. X Fee Transmittal Form  
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. X Specification (Total Pages 29)  
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
  - Descriptive Title of the Invention
  - Cross References to Related Applications
  - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
  - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
  - Background of the Invention
  - Brief Summary of the Invention
  - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
  - Detailed Description
  - Claims
  - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. X Drawings(s) (35 USC 113) (Total Sheets 1)
4. X Oath or Declaration (Total Pages 5 unsigned)
  - a.      Newly Executed (Original or Copy)
  - b.      Copy from a Prior Application (37 CFR 1.63(d))  
(for Continuation/Divisional with Box 17 completed) (**Note Box 5 below**)
  - i.      DELETIONS OF INVENTOR(S) Signed statement attached deleting  
inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2)  
and 1.33(b).
5.      Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4b is checked)  
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or  
declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the  
disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by  
reference therein.
6.      Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission  
(if applicable, all necessary)  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ Computer Readable Copy  
b. \_\_\_\_\_ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)  
c. \_\_\_\_\_ Statement verifying identity of above copies

**ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS**

8. \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & documents(s))  
9. \_\_\_\_\_ a. 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (where there is an assignee)  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Power of Attorney  
10. \_\_\_\_\_ English Translation Document (if applicable)  
11. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Copies of IDS Citations  
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Preliminary Amendment  
13.  X  Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized)  
14.  X  a. Small Entity Statement(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired  
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)  
16.  X  Other:  Express certificate of mailing   
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. **If a CONTINUING APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:  
\_\_\_\_ Continuation      \_\_\_\_ Divisional      \_\_\_\_ Continuation-in-part (CIP)  
of prior application No: \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Correspondence Address**

\_\_\_\_ Customer Number or Bar Code Label \_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert Customer No. or Attach Bar Code Label here)  
or

X  Correspondence Address Below

NAME  Dag H. Johansen (Reg. No. 36,172)   
 BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

ADDRESS  12400 Wilshire Boulevard   
 Seventh Floor

CITY  Los Angeles  STATE  California  ZIP CODE  90025-1026

Country  U.S.A.  TELEPHONE  (408) 720-8598  FAX  (408) 720-9397

12/01/97

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Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Applicant or Patentee: Keller et al. Attorney's  
Serial or Patent No.: Not assigned Docket No. 003931.P001  
Filed or Issued: Herewith  
For: **Method and Arrangement for Collecting and Using Post Internet Sales Information**

VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS  
37 CFR 1.9 (f) and 1.27(c) - - SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

I hereby declare that I am:

- ☐ the owner of the small business concern identified below:  
☒ an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below:

NAME OF CONCERN: BUYERMAIL.COM

ADDRESS OF CONCERN: 4800B EL CAMINO REAL, LOS ALTOS, CA 94022

I hereby declare that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR 121.3-18, and reproduced in 37 CFR 1.9(d), for purposes of paying reduced fees under Section 41(a) and (b) of Title 35, United States Code, in that the number of employees of the concern, including those of its affiliates, does not exceed 500 persons. For purposes of this statement, (1) the number of employees of the business concern is the average over the previous fiscal year of the concern of the persons employed on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis during each of the pay periods of the fiscal year, and (2) concerns are affiliates of each other when either, directly or indirectly, one concern controls or has the power to control the other, or a third party or parties controls or has the power to control both.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention entitled **Method and Arrangement for Collecting and Using Post Internet Sales Information** by inventor(s) Arthur M. Keller and Sanjai Tiwari described in

- ☒ the specification being filed herewith  
☐ application serial no. \_\_\_\_\_, filed \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ patent no. \_\_\_\_\_, issued \_\_\_\_\_

**and I have reviewed the document that evidences the conveyance of those rights.** That document

- ☒ is being filed herewith.  
☐ was recorded in the Patent and Trademark Office on \_\_\_\_\_, 19 \_\_\_\_  
at reel \_\_\_\_\_ and frame \_\_\_\_\_.

If the rights held by the above-identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern or organization having rights to the invention is listed below and **no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who could not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 347 CFR 1.9(d) or a non-profit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).** NOTE: Separate verified statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention averring to their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ☐ ] Individual [ ☐ ] Small Business Concern [ ☐ ] Non-Profit Organization

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ☐ ] Individual [ ☐ ] Small Business Concern [ ☐ ] Non-Profit Organization

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b))

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING: SANJAI TIWARI

TITLE OF PERSON OTHER THAN OWNER: PRESIDENT

ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING: 117 CONCORD CIRCLE, MT. VIEW, CA 94040

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

FOR

**Method And Arrangement For Collecting And  
Using Post Internet Sales Information**

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I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Grace R. Cruz

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(Signature of person mailing papers or fee)

# **Method And Arrangement For Collecting And Using Post Internet Sales Information**

## **RELATED APPLICATIONS**

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This patent application is based upon the provisional patent application filed on January 7, 1999 with serial number 60/115,244, and claims priority based upon that provisional patent application.

## **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

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The present invention relates to the field of electronic commerce. In particular the present invention discloses an arrangement and methods for capturing and using Internet sales information after a transaction has occurred.

15

## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

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The Internet is a global interconnection of computer networks that share a common set of protocols. Most computers on the global Internet use the Transport Control Protocol layer and the Internet Protocol layer commonly referred to as TCP/IP. By sharing a set of nonproprietary well-defined communication protocols, the Internet allows almost any computer system to communicate with any other computer system.

25

The Internet has existed in some form since 1969. It was used mainly by scientists and engineers until relatively recently. In the late 1980's and early nineties

when personal computer systems became powerful enough to handle networking, a wider audience of users began using the Internet. Initially, most users used the Internet for file transfer, discussion groups, and email using the file transfer protocol (FTP), the network news protocol (NNTP), and the simple mail transport protocol (SMTP), respectively.

5

One particular transport protocol known as the hypertext transport protocol (HTTP) was created for sharing hypertext markup language (HTML) documents. The HTTP and HTML enabled the creation of simple-to-use but media rich documents that could easily be “browsed”. By linking together HTML documents located on various servers throughout the world using embedded hyperlinks, a “World Wide Web” (WWW) of interconnected hypertext documents was created. Due to the simple, yet powerful nature of HTML and HTTP, the World Wide Web (WWW) portion of the Internet has grown into the most popular form of Internet communication.

10

15

The WWW quickly became a new mass media system for information distribution. With the help of advertising support, thousands of news and information web sites have been created.

20

The HTML and HTTP standards have been amended to handle two-way communication. Specifically, a user can be presented with a “form” that can be filled-in and send back to a server. Using processing system often known as Common Gateway Interface (CGI) scripts, a server can obtain information from a person browsing its pages. These interactive techniques have been used to create commercial WWW sites that can perform financial transactions. Thus, the Internet has become the new frontier of commercial commerce.

25

Internet commerce is growing at an exponential rate. New methods of handling the all the information generated by Internet based commercial transactions would be desirable.



## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is a method for gathering detailed information about products (and services) purchased on the Internet by examining electronic mail

5 acknowledgements. When consumers purchase products over the Internet, the seller sends an acknowledgement back to the consumer listing the products purchased. Then registration entity's server makes a copy of the acknowledgment, parses it, and stores it in a database at the server. The consumer then connects to the server and downloads new purchases into a database on his PC. Client software running on the PC enables the

10 consumer to search and analyze the list of products purchased, to check off the products received, and to load purchases into financial management software, such as Intuit's Quicken and Microsoft Money. If the seller sends an email acknowledgement of the shipment, the registration entity will get a copy of it and then inform the consumer and record the shipment in transit in the client database. If the seller does not send an email

15 acknowledgement, but instead makes shipment information available on the seller's web site, and then the server software will probe the web site periodically, and then continue as if an email acknowledgement were sent to the consumer.

Other objects, features, and advantages of present invention will be

20 apparent from the company drawings and from the following detailed description.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will be apparent to one skilled in the art, in view of the following detailed description in which:

5

**Figure 1** illustrates the flow of information between the consumer, the registration entity, and the electronic commerce retailer.

FIG. 1 is a flow diagram illustrating the flow of information between the consumer, the registration entity, and the electronic commerce retailer.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A method and apparatus for collecting and using post Internet sales information is disclosed. In the following description, for purposes of explanation,  
5 specific nomenclature is set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that these specific details are not required in order to practice the present invention.

To illustrate the teachings of the present invention, **Figure 1** illustrates the  
10 data flow between a customer **111**, an electronic commerce retailer site **123**, and a registration entity server **130**.

### **Electronic Transaction Information Gathering**

15 To track electronic transactions for the benefit of a consumer, the consumer may register with a registration entity. The registration may be performed either directly or through an agent, such as an ISP. When the consumer registers, the consumer receives an identifier (the consumer ID) from the registration entity. In one embodiment, the consumer registers at a web site provided by the registration entity.

20 In one embodiment, the consumer may also receive a personal email address (registered consumer email address) from the registration entity. The registered consumer email address will then be used when the consumer executes an electronic commerce transaction. In such an embodiment, the consumer provides his or her existing  
25 personal email address to the registration entity. The existing personal email address will be used to forward email messages to the consumer.

After registering with the registration entity, the consumer makes one or more purchases of items from an electronic commerce retailer. The data for such a transaction will proceed as illustrated in **Figure 1** with data flow **191**. Examples of electronic commerce based retailers include Internet web site based retailers like Amazon  
5 (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Buy.com (<http://www.buy.com/>).

When a consumer makes an electronic commerce purchase, the registration entity receives information about the transaction along data flow **192** in **Figure 1**. The transaction information is also provided to the consumer **111** along data  
10 flow **193**. The transaction information is usually in the form of a transaction acknowledgement from the electronic commerce retailer. Such transaction acknowledgements indicate the purchase and shipping information.

The transaction acknowledgement from the electronic commerce retailer  
15 may take the form of an email message from the electronic commerce retailer. In such cases, the transaction acknowledgement email may be passed to the registration entity in many different manners.

In a first manner, the consumer may supply the registered consumer email  
20 address received from the registration entity when making purchases. In such an arrangement, the registration entity receives the transaction acknowledgement email directly from the electronic commerce retailer since the registered consumer email address is routed directly to the registration entity. After processing the transaction acknowledgement email, the registration entity passes the transaction acknowledgement  
25 email on to the consumer's existing personal email address along data flow **193**. (The consumer's personal email address was provided to the registration entity when the consumer joins the service.)

It should be noted that in this arrangement, any unsolicited commercial  
30 email (commonly known as "Spam") that is sent to the registered consumer email address

can be filtered by the registration entity. Thus, the consumer can be shielded from unsolicited commercial email ("Spam") that results from an electronic commerce retailer that sells their mailing list (a collection of email addresses collected from a series of transactions).

5

In a second manner, the consumer authorizes an ISP (Internet Service Provider) to run special email parsing software. The special email parsing software checks all incoming email for transaction acknowledgements. When a transaction acknowledgement email for a registered consumer is located, the special email parsing software makes a copy of the transaction acknowledgement email and sends the copy to the registration entity.

10

In a third manner, the registration entity provides a special plug-in program to the email client of the consumer. The special plug-in program identifies transaction acknowledgement email messages and forwards a copy of transaction acknowledgement email messages to the registration entity.

15

In a fourth manner, the seller cooperatively sends the transaction acknowledgement email to the registration entity directly. Finally, in a fifth manner the consumer may send transaction acknowledgements to the registration entity. In any of these cases, both the consumer and registration entity receive a copy of the transaction acknowledgement email messages.

20

Transaction acknowledgement messages may be delivered to consumers in the form of World Wide Web (WWW) page. To obtain information from such transaction acknowledgements, a plug-in program may be provided for the consumer's WWW browser. The plug-in may automatically scan web pages to determine if the web page is a transaction acknowledgement. Alternatively, the consumer may invoke the web page based transaction scanner. WWW pages that appear to be transaction acknowledgements could be forwarded to the registration entity. The WWW pages may

25

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be analyzed for transaction information on the consumer's computer system such that only the transaction information is sent to the registration entity. Alternatively, the plug-in program may send the web page source such that a computer at the registration entity can extract the transaction information.

5

Some electronic commerce sites maintain a history of all transactions made by each consumer such that a consumer can review his past transactions. To review such information, the consumer usually navigates to the electronic commerce site and enters an authentication code (such as a username and/or password). The registration entity of the present invention can work with such system to automatically obtain new transaction information. To accomplish this, the consumer provides his authentication code to the registration entity. The registration entity then periodically examines the user's transactions to locate new transactions. The new transactions are then entered into the transaction database.

10

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The registration entity parses the transaction acknowledgements to ascertain the type of transaction. For a purchase transaction, the registration entity's software determines what products have been purchased, how much they cost, where they were shipped, transaction reference IDs, and who were the consumer and seller, as well as other information, such as how the purchase was paid. For other known transactions, such as shipping notices, backorder notices, and return acknowledgements, the registration entity's software parses the message to obtain the appropriate data, such the reference IDs, consumer and seller information, and information about the relevant items. The registration entity's software uses a model of the seller describing the acknowledgement message content patterns and message sequencing patterns for use by the parser and to model transaction workflow. The registration entity's software stores the transaction data in a database at the registration entity server, and identifies the transaction by the consumer's registration ID.

20

25

The registration entity's software will thread together the related transactions of the consumer (e.g., purchase and shipping acknowledgements are threaded together). The registration entity thus stores (along data flow **194**) all the electronic commerce transactions of the registered consumers in a transaction database **131** in an organized manner.

It should be noted that the parsing of email messages might occur at locations other than a server at the registration entity. The parsing and database functions, or parts of these functions, may occur elsewhere. For example, the consumer's own personal computer or a server at an ISP may perform the parsing or database functions. If the parsing is performed elsewhere, a mechanism is needed to update the model of the seller's messages wherever the parsing is done. Such updating can occur if necessary either periodically, when acknowledgement messages are received, by manual request (possibly because parsing software has suggested it), or by "push" distribution from the registration entity, using any Internet communication protocol such as email, FTP or Web. If the parsing was done at the consumer's personal computer, then the electronic commerce transaction information can be uploaded to a server, such as the registration entity or other server, for reliability, location independence, or to enable services provided by the registration entity or other service provider.

### **Electronic Transaction Information Usage**

The registration entity can provide a number of useful services to the consumers that register for the service. One simple service is purchase tracking. To keep track of all electronic commerce purchases, a registered consumer connects to the registration entity server through the Internet using a web browser or private protocol in a secure manner, as illustrated by data flow **195**. The consumer authenticates himself with his registration ID. The registration entity server obtains all the transaction data from the transaction database **131** along data flow **196**. The registration entity server allows the

consumer to access purchase transaction data through the web at the registration entity or to download through the Internet (or an alternative network) along data flow 197 into consumer's PC, or both.

5                Instead of using a server at registration entity's site, the transaction database may be maintained on a server by an ISP, ECP (Electronic Commerce Provider), or other entity such as an Internet portal. Alternatively, the transaction data may be stored on the consumer's personal computer after the transaction data has been parsed (particularly if the parsing was done at the consumer's personal computer). The  
10 consumer may check off items received and query purchased items by a variety of criteria including preconfigured options and ad hoc queries. The recording of items received can occur at the consumer's personal computer or at the registration entity or other server, or both.

15                The registration entity can perform various mundane accounting tasks for the consumer if desired. For example, if the consumer is using a financial management software package, such as Intuit's Quicken or Microsoft Money, then the registration entity's software running on the consumer's personal computer can automatically enter electronic commerce transactions into the financial management software package. This  
20 task may be performed by a standalone application or a web browser plug-in on the consumer's personal computer. The transactions may be fetched from the registration entity's server. Alternatively, such transactions may be entered into the financial software when detected on the consumer's personal computer. Another accounting task that may be performed by the registration entity is the creation of travel and expense reports. The  
25 ability to download all or a requested subset of the consumer's purchases and related transactions from the registration entity transaction database server or other transaction database server to the consumer's personal computer exists for analysis, recovery of financial data files, or other consumer purpose. The data can be loaded into Quicken or Microsoft Money or other programs running on the consumer's PC, such as spreadsheets.



In addition, the registration entity can assist with returns to and customer service interactions with sellers. When the consumer wishes to initiate a return of one or more items to a seller, the registration entity's software running on the consumer's PC, the registration entity's or other server, or at an ISP can use the purchase transaction data to initiate a request to the seller for a return. This return request can be done via an email message to the seller, or interacting with the seller's web site, on behalf of the consumer. If a request is given to a seller, the registration entity's software will await the response from the seller. When the response is received from the seller, or for sellers who do not require a request for return, the registration entity's software records the return at the consumer's PC, or at the registration entity's or other server, creates shipping labels as necessary, arranges for shipping carrier (such as UPS or FedEx) pickup, and then notifies seller if necessary.

Shipments of products from the seller to the consumer (or to third parties in the case of gifts), or returns back to the seller are tracked by the registration entity in any of these ways: (1) messages from seller notifying the consumer of pending, expected, or actual shipment or of delays or not shipping (such as out of stock) the items purchased or requested, (2) checking the seller's web site (periodically or on consumer's demand) on behalf of the consumer to look for shipment information, and (3) checking the web sites of shipping companies, such as UPS and FedEx for shipment tracking information. The status of shipments are recorded in transaction databases at the consumer's PC and/or the registration entity's or other server, or elsewhere.

The consumer's Internet-based customer service interaction with sellers can also be assisted by the registration entity's software running on the consumer's PC, the registration entity's or other server, or elsewhere. This software will help compose messages, such as providing fill-in-the-blanks templates for submission to the seller via email, electronic commerce retailer's web site, hardcopy mail, or a combination. The software will also track responses from the seller via email, seller's web site, or a

combination. If a response is received in hardcopy, the consumer can log the response to the registration entity's software as well.

The transaction database **131** can be data-mined for useful consumer  
5 information. The registration entity can generate wealth of consumer demographic data by analyzing the transactions in the transaction database **131**. For example, the data can be analyzed to determine the most popular electronic commerce web sites, the types of products purchased by certain demographics groups, the demographics of electronic purchasers, and other useful information. The information may be used to provide special  
10 targeted offers to the registered. One example of special offers would be digital coupons. Such an application is specified in the provisional patent application entitled "Method And Arrangement For Issuance And Management Of Digital Coupons And Sales Offers" filed concurrently with this provisional patent application and hereby incorporated by reference.

The transaction database **131** can be data-mined for useful electronic  
commerce retailer performance information. For example, the registration entity can keep track of transaction completions and delivery notices to determine which electronic commerce retailers provide the fastest service. Furthermore, the registration entity can  
20 track consumer returns to determine the electronic commerce sites that receive the least and most returns.

Wherever we have specified the consumer's PC, we include Macintoshes, workstations such as UNIX or LINUX, or any computer or other device running email or  
25 web browsing software, such as WebTV or Palm Pilot.

The foregoing has described a method and apparatus for collecting and using post Internet sales information. It is contemplated that changes and modifications

may be made by one of ordinary skill in the art, to the materials and arrangements of elements of the present invention without departing from the scope of the invention.

03931.P001

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1                   1.     A method of obtaining electronic commerce purchases, said  
2 method comprising:  
3                   accepting registrations from a plurality electronic commerce customers, each said  
4                   electronic commerce customers providing a customer email address;  
5                   providing a registered email address to each said electronic customer; and  
6                   accepting transaction acknowledgement email sent to said registered email  
7                   addresses for transactions between at least one electronic commerce retailer  
8                   and said electronic commerce customers.

1                   2.     The method as claimed in claim 1, said method further comprising:  
2 storing information from said transaction acknowledgement email into a  
3                   transaction database.

1                   3.     The method as claimed in claim 1, said method further comprising:  
2 forwarding said transaction acknowledgement email to said electronic commerce  
3                   customers using said customer email addresses.

1           4.     The method as claimed in claim 1, said method further comprising:  
2     providing a record of electronic transactions to said electronic commerce  
3     customers using a web site.

1           5.     The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein storing information  
2     from said transaction acknowledgement email into said transaction database comprises  
3     automatically parsing said transaction acknowledgement email to obtain said information.

1           6.     The method as claimed in claim 2, said method further comprising:  
2     datamining said transaction database for desired electronic commerce information.

1           7.     The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said desired electronic  
2     commerce information comprises a list of products often purchased using electronic  
3     commerce transactions.

1           8.     The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said desired electronic  
2     commerce information comprises a relative popularity of various electronic commerce  
3     sites.

1                   9.     The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein said desired electronic  
2 commerce information comprises customer demographic information.

1                   10.    The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said information from  
2 said transaction acknowledgement email comprises ~~products~~ purchased.

1                   11.    The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said information from  
2 said transaction acknowledgement email comprises ~~product~~ costs.

1                   12.    The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said information from  
2 said transaction acknowledgement email comprises transaction identifiers.

1                   13.    The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said information from  
2 said transaction acknowledgement email comprises shipping information.

1                   14.    The method as claimed in claim 13, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3                   accessing a third party shipping Internet site;

4 retrieving shipment status information using said shipping information or  
5 transaction identifiers.

1 15. The method as claimed in claim 2, said method further comprising:  
2 assisting said electronic commerce customers with customer interaction with said  
3 electronic commerce retailer using said information from said transaction  
4 acknowledgement email in said transaction database.

1 16. The method as claimed in claim 15 wherein said customer  
2 interaction comprises a product return.

1 17. The method as claimed in claim 2, said method further comprising:  
2 targeting special offers to a subset of electronic commerce customers by accessing  
3 information in said transaction database.

1 18. The method as claimed in claim 2, said method further comprising:  
2 updating said information in said transaction database with shipment information.

1                    19.    The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said shipment  
2    information is entered by said electronic commerce customers.

1                    20.    The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said shipment  
2    information is obtained by accessing a web site of said electronic commerce retailer.

1                    21.    The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said shipment  
2    information is obtained by accessing a web site of a third party shipper.

1                    22.    The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said shipment  
2    information is obtained from an email message from said electronic commerce retailer or  
3    third party shipper.

1                    23.    The method as claimed in claim 1, said method further comprising:  
2    filtering spam sent to said registered email address.

1                    24.    A method of tracking electronic commerce information, said  
2    method comprising:  
3                    accepting registrations from a plurality of electronic commerce customers;



4 examining electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements from electronic  
5 transactions between a plurality of electronic commerce retailers and said  
6 electronic commerce customers; and  
7 storing information from said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements  
8 into an electronic transaction database.

1 25. The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein storing information  
2 from said transaction acknowledgement into said electronic transaction database  
3 comprises automatically parsing said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements  
4 to obtain said information.

1 26. The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3 scanning electronic commerce transaction acknowledgement web pages to receive  
4 said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements.

1 27. The method as claimed in claim 26 further comprising:  
2 automatically parsing said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgement  
3 web pages to obtain said information.  
4

1                   28.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3           receiving electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements in the form of  
4           electronic transaction acknowledgement email from electronic transactions  
5           between a plurality of electronic commerce retailers and said electronic  
6           commerce customers.

1                   29.    The method as claimed in claim 28 further comprising:  
2 automatically parsing said electronic transaction acknowledgement email to  
3           obtain said information.  
4

1                   30.    The method as claimed in claim 28 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is received directly from said plurality of electronic  
3 commerce retailers.

1                   31.    The method as claimed in claim 28 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is received from email serving sites of said electronic  
3 commerce customers.

1                   32.    The method as claimed in claim 31 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is automatically sent by a filter program on  
3 computers associated with said email-serving sites.

1                   33.    The method as claimed in claim 32 wherein said filter program  
2 identifies said electronic transaction acknowledgement email associated with said  
3 electronic commerce customers and sends said electronic transaction acknowledgement  
4 email.

1                   34.    The method as claimed in claim 31 wherein said email-serving  
2 sites comprise Internet service providers.

1                   35.    The method as claimed in claim 28 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is received from said electronic commerce  
3 customers.

1                   36.    The method as claimed in claim 35 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is manually sent by said electronic commerce  
3 customers.

1           37.    The method as claimed in claim 35 wherein said electronic  
2 transaction acknowledgement email is automatically sent by a program on computers  
3 associated with said electronic commerce customers.

1           38.    The method as claimed in claim 37 wherein said program identifies  
2 said electronic transaction acknowledgement email and sends said electronic transaction  
3 acknowledgement email.

1           39.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3           accessing an electronic commerce site with authentication information from said  
4           electronic commerce customers to receive said electronic commerce  
5           transaction acknowledgements.

1           40.    The method as claimed in claim 39 wherein said authentication  
2 information comprises a username and password.

1                   41.    The method as claimed in claim 28, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3                   forwarding said transaction acknowledgement email to said electronic commerce  
4                   customers using email addresses of said electronic commerce customers.

1                   42.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3                   providing a record of said electronic transactions to said electronic commerce  
4                   customers using a web site.

1                   43.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3                   datamining said electronic transaction database for desired electronic commerce  
4                   information.

1                   44.    The method as claimed in claim 43 wherein said desired electronic  
2 commerce information comprises a list of products often purchased using electronic  
3 commerce transactions.

1           45.    The method as claimed in claim 43 wherein said desired electronic  
2 commerce information comprises a relative popularity of various electronic commerce  
3 sites.

1           46.    The method as claimed in claim 43 wherein said desired electronic  
2 commerce information comprises customer demographic information.

1           47.    The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said information from  
2 said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements comprises products purchased.

1           48.    The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said information from  
2 said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements comprises product costs.

1           49.    The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said information from  
2 said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements comprises transaction  
3 identifiers.

1           50.    The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said information from  
2 said electronic commerce transaction acknowledgements comprises shipping information.

1           51.    The method as claimed in claim 50, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3           accessing a third party shipping Internet site;  
4           retrieving shipment status information using said shipping information.

1           52.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3           assisting said electronic commerce customers with customer interaction with said  
4           electronic commerce retailer using said information from said electronic  
5           commerce transaction acknowledgements in said transaction database.

1           53.    The method as claimed in claim 52 wherein said customer  
2 interaction comprises a product return.

1           54.    The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3           targeting special offers to a subset of electronic commerce customers by accessing  
4           information in said transaction database.

1                    55.     The method as claimed in claim 24, said method further  
2 comprising:  
3                    updating said information in said transaction database with shipment information.

1                    56.     The method as claimed in claim 55 wherein said shipment  
2 information is entered by said electronic commerce customers.

1                    57.     The method as claimed in claim 55 wherein said shipment  
2 information is obtained by accessing a web site of said electronic commerce retailer.

1                    58.     The method as claimed in claim 55 wherein said shipment  
2 information is obtained from an email message from said electronic commerce retailer or  
3 a third party shipper.



## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention is a method for gathering detailed information about products (and services) purchased on the Internet by examining electronic mail acknowledgements. When consumers purchase products over the Internet, the seller sends an acknowledgement back to the consumer listing the products purchased. Then registration entity's server makes a copy of the acknowledgment, parses it, and stores it in a database at the server. The consumer then connects to the server and downloads new purchases into a database on his PC. Client software running on the PC enables the consumer to search and analyze the list of products purchased, to check off the products received, and to load purchases into financial management software, such as Intuit's Quicken and Microsoft Money. If the seller sends an email acknowledgement of the shipment, the registration entity will get a copy of it and then inform the consumer and record the shipment in transit in the client database. If the seller does not send an email acknowledgement, but instead makes shipment information available on the seller's web site, and then the server software will probe the web site periodically, and then continue as if an email acknowledgement were sent to the consumer.



**DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first, and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

**Method and Arrangement for Collecting and Using Post Internet Sales Information**

the specification of which

XX is attached hereto.  
     was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as  
United States Application Number \_\_\_\_\_  
or PCT International Application Number \_\_\_\_\_  
and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim(s), as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the claimed invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, and that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months (for a utility patent application) or six months (for a design patent application) prior to this application.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d), of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority  
Claimed

<u>PCT/US99/15649</u> (Number)	<u>PCT</u> (Country)	<u>July 9, 1999</u> (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<u>X</u> Yes	<u>    </u> No
<u>                    </u> (Number)	<u>                    </u> (Country)	<u>                    </u> (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>                    </u> (Number)	<u>                    </u> (Country)	<u>                    </u> (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>

I hereby claim the benefit under title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below

<u>60/115,244</u> (Application Number)	<u>1/7/99</u> Filing Date
<u>                    </u> (Application Number)	<u>                    </u> Filing Date

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

<u>                    </u> (Application Number)	<u>                    </u> Filing Date	<u>                    </u> (Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)
<u>                    </u> (Application Number)	<u>                    </u> Filing Date	<u>                    </u> (Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint the persons listed on Appendix A hereto (which is incorporated by reference and a part of this document) as my respective patent attorneys and patent agents, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected herewith.

Send correspondence to Dag H. Johansen, **BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP, 12400 Wilshire Boulevard 7th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90025 and direct telephone calls to** Dag H. Johansen, (408) 720-8598.  
(Name of Attorney or Agent)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Inventor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX A

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## APPENDIX B

### Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 Duty to Disclose Information Material to Patentability

(a) A patent by its very nature is affected with a public interest. The public interest is best served, and the most effective patent examination occurs when, at the time an application is being examined, the Office is aware of and evaluates the teachings of all information material to patentability. Each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of a patent application has a duty of candor and good faith in dealing with the Office, which includes a duty to disclose to the Office all information known to that individual to be material to patentability as defined in this section. The duty to disclose information exists with respect to each pending claim until the claim is cancelled or withdrawn from consideration, or the application becomes abandoned. Information material to the patentability of a claim that is cancelled or withdrawn from consideration need not be submitted if the information is not material to the patentability of any claim remaining under consideration in the application. There is no duty to submit information which is not material to the patentability of any existing claim. The duty to disclose all information known to be material to patentability is deemed to be satisfied if all information known to be material to patentability of any claim issued in a patent was cited by the Office or submitted to the Office in the manner prescribed by §§1.97(b)-(d) and 1.98. However, no patent will be granted on an application in connection with which fraud on the Office was practiced or attempted or the duty of disclosure was violated through bad faith or intentional misconduct. The Office encourages applicants to carefully examine:

(1) Prior art cited in search reports of a foreign patent office in a counterpart application, and

(2) The closest information over which individuals associated with the filing or prosecution of a patent application believe any pending claim patentably defines, to make sure that any material information contained therein is disclosed to the Office.

(b) Under this section, information is material to patentability when it is not cumulative to information already of record or being made of record in the application, and

(1) It establishes, by itself or in combination with other information, a prima facie case of unpatentability of a claim; or

(2) It refutes, or is inconsistent with, a position the applicant takes in:

(i) Opposing an argument of unpatentability relied on by the Office, or

(ii) Asserting an argument of patentability.

A prima facie case of unpatentability is established when the information compels a conclusion that a claim is unpatentable under the preponderance of evidence, burden-of-proof standard, giving each term in the claim its broadest reasonable construction consistent with the specification, and before any consideration is given to evidence which may be submitted in an attempt to establish a contrary conclusion of patentability.

(c) Individuals associated with the filing or prosecution of a patent application within the meaning of this section are:

(1) Each inventor named in the application;

(2) Each attorney or agent who prepares or prosecutes the application; and

(3) Every other person who is substantively involved in the preparation or prosecution of the application and who is associated with the inventor, with the assignee or with anyone to whom there is an obligation to assign the application.

(d) Individuals other than the attorney, agent or inventor may comply with this section by disclosing information to the attorney, agent, or inventor.